

CHAPTER 46
RURAL ENTERPRISE FUND

[Prior to 7/19/95, see 261—Ch 67]

261—46.1(15) Purpose. The purpose of this program is to provide grants for rural communities or consortia of communities in their community and economic development planning and implementation activities. Guidelines for the project encourage: pooling of resources within and outside the communities; cooperation among communities, counties, and regions; stronger linkages with existing service providers; and innovative models for rural economic development planning.

261—46.2(15) Program eligibility. Eligible applicants include: rural communities; rural counties; and councils of government and educational institutions, including public and private universities and colleges and merged area schools, applying on behalf of rural communities and counties. Applicants must be able to demonstrate a match which equals 25 percent of the grant amount requested in the form of cash, capital investment, or in-kind services.

46.2(1) Eligible projects shall target specific rural population areas including, but not limited to:

- a. Individual communities of 5,000 or less in population.
- b. Consortia of communities where each community is 5,000 or less.
- c. Consortia of communities where each community is 5,000 or less plus a community which is 20,000 or less.
- d. Counties which are 25,000 or less.
- e. Regions where the majority of participating units, communities or counties are rural as defined in 46.2(1)“a” to “d.”

46.2(2) Eligible projects. Examples of eligible projects include, but are not limited to, the following:

- a. Develop or support multicomunity economic development organizations or regional associations to: (1) formulate a rural development plan, or (2) implement a rural development plan, or (3) formulate and implement a rural development plan which focuses on specific business/economic development opportunities, local services or community efforts to improve quality of life.
- b. Stimulate the development of new economic opportunities or associations of groups which have not previously been involved in the mainstream of economic development (youth, elderly, small and home-based businesses, disadvantaged).
- c. Develop coalitions among local industries and the community organizations to enhance marketing of products or create shared services.

261—46.3(15) General policies for application.

46.3(1) The maximum award for a single project is \$50,000.

46.3(2) Applications shall include a letter of endorsement by a local service provider such as the community college, satellite center, private college or university, regional coordinating council, ISU extension county or area office, regional planning commission or other appropriate service provider who agrees to assist in the project. The letter of endorsement should specify service and support to be provided by the local service provider.

46.3(3) If a consortium of communities applies, one community or a county shall be designated as the recipient of funds. An official of that legal entity shall sign the application accepting responsibility for the funds.

46.3(4) Program implementation timetables shall not exceed 24 months.

46.3(5) The department will disseminate a request for proposals to appropriate entities.

261—46.4(15) Application procedures. Applications shall be submitted to the Rural Development Coordinator, Iowa Department of Economic Development, 200 East Grand Avenue, Des Moines,

Iowa 50309. Application forms and instructions are available at this address or by calling (515)242-4840.

261—46.5(15) Application contents. Required contents of the application include:

46.5(1) A summary sheet including title and project summary statement; name, address, and telephone number of one person who will serve as the contact for the application; the geographic area to be served; and total program budget including applicant match.

46.5(2) A current community/economic development plan, if available, and a status report on development planning activity proceeding in the community.

46.5(3) A narrative on the applicant’s inherent strengths and capacities that can be built upon to further the development of the community/area.

46.5(4) A description of the type of technical assistance that would be helpful in building upon these strengths and capacities and would meet local needs that otherwise might not be met.

46.5(5) A description of objectives and activities which would be undertaken by the program participants.

46.5(6) A narrative on the type of support that would be contributed locally, including cash, capital investments, in-kind services and volunteer time commitment.

261—46.6(15) Review process. Each eligible application will be reviewed by a committee within the department. Applications that score fewer than 300 points under subrule 46.6(2) will not be recommended for funding. Applicants may be interviewed further to: explore the potential for providing technical assistance, gain additional information concerning the proposal, and negotiate the project’s work plan.

46.6(1) Ranking. The committee will rank the applications based on the following criteria:

a. Appropriateness and effectiveness of the project or model in addressing the issues or problems identified within the community or area.

b. Networking and cooperation with existing service providers, local organizations, and other communities. Leadership involvement from the community or area is a vital component.

c. Need for the project in this community/area (unemployment, remoteness, low population density, business closings, accessibility to services, low level of new business start-ups, traditional barriers such as historical community rivalries, lack of leadership, etc.).

d. Viability of objectives and work plan and impact of project on community/communities (for example, potential for future job creation, development of stronger alliances among community planning groups and service providers, development of better community image).

e. Local effort by community or consortium of communities (cash, office space, in-kind contributions, volunteer hours, etc.).

46.6(2) Scoring. The scoring system has a maximum of 500 points.

a. Appropriateness of the project to the issues/problems 100 points possible

b. Networking or cooperative efforts among participating units and service providers 100 points possible

c. Need for the project 50 points possible

d. Viability of objectives and work plan 125 points possible

Impact of project (200 total points) 75 points possible

e. Local effort 50 points possible

261—46.7(15) Award process. Recommendations by the committee for funding will be forwarded to the director of the department for final decisions. Applicants will be notified in writing after the final decisions on grants are made. Successful applicants will enter into an agreement with the department which clarifies their responsibilities as a grantee for oversight of the project and reporting to the department.

261—46.8(15) Eligible and ineligible expenses.

46.8(1) Expenses eligible for reimbursement may include, but are not limited to, the following:

a. Travel expenses, office, meeting expenses, and office equipment pertaining to specific goals of the project.

b. Coordinating staff for the community or county or development group.

c. Feasibility studies or implementation of an existing study or plan.

d. Educational/training materials.

46.8(2) Expenses ineligible for reimbursement may include, but are not limited to, the following:

a. Purchase of land or buildings or improvements thereon.

b. Expenses for development or purchase of recreational sites and facilities.

c. Expenses for renovation of historical/cultural attractions.

261—46.9(15) Program management.

46.9(1) Record keeping. Financial records, supporting documents, statistical records and all other records pertinent to the project shall be retained by the grantee.

46.9(2) A contract will be negotiated with the successful applicants to define the terms for disbursement of funds and responsibilities.

46.9(3) Representatives of the department and state auditors shall have access to all books, accounts and documents belonging to or in use by the grantee pertaining to the receipt of assistance under this program.

46.9(4) All contracts under this program are subject to audit.

261—46.10(15) Performance reviews.

46.10(1) Applicants will be required to submit a quarterly performance report to the department. The report will assess progress on the goals and project activities.

46.10(2) The department may perform field visits as deemed necessary.

These rules are intended to implement Iowa Code section 99E.32(3).

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